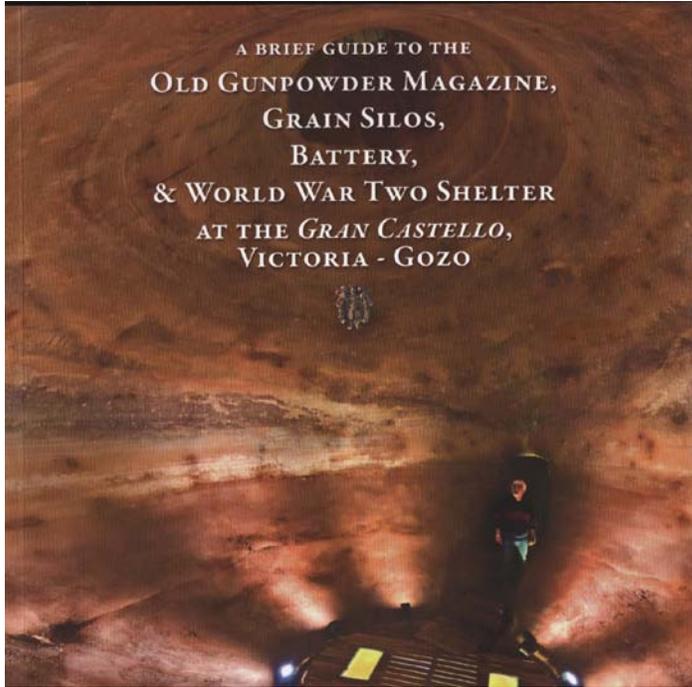


A Guide to historical sites in Gozo's *Cittadella*

The Gozitan NGO *Wirt Għawdex*, has recently published its fifth book in the series of guide books on historical sites in Gozo, entrusted unto her: *A brief guide to the Old Gunpowder Magazine, Grain Silos, Battery, & World War Two Shelter at the Gran Castello, Victoria – Gozo*, Malta, 2012; ISBN 978-99957-0-260-1; pp. 32; illustrated.

The text is written by Godwin Vella who graduated BA (Hons.) in Archaeology in 1995 and MA in Business Administration with a focus on Heritage Interpretation in



2002, with the University of Malta. Vella, who was once also Secretary of *Wirt Għawdex*, served on a number of government appointed boards and committees in the heritage sector and authored several essays on Gozo's cultural patrimony. Besides he managed Heritage Malta's Gozo Area Office and is currently head of the Ethnography Unit within the same national agency.

In this publication, the author gives a short history of the *Gran Castello* – more popularly known with the inhabitants as *Iċ-Ċittadella* (The Citadel) perched on the hill in the centre of

Malta's largest sister island, Gozo – and its architectural attractions. He states that this fortress 'played a leading act in the Island's affairs from at least the mid-second millennium BC', and went on helping in the defence of the inhabitants until it was decommissioned by the War Department, under British rule, in 1868. A breathtaking colourful aerial panoramic photo of the dominating bastions, with the Gozo cathedral, some historical buildings, and old houses in ruins within, spreads over pages 6 and 7.

'The Old Gunpowder Magazine' – in Maltese *Il-Polvrista* – is a chapter dedicated to this site, one of four within the walls of the *Castello* being taken care of and offered for viewing by whoever is interested, Maltese and foreigners alike, by *Wirt Għawdex*.

In this short chapter, Vella relates the relative importance this magazine had, in the past, with the defence principal gun platforms – bastions, demi-bastions, cavaliers, a redoubt, and a battery. A colourful digital design of St John's Cavalier and Demi-Bastion – created by photographer Daniel Cilia, who designed and illustrated the book with marvellous colour photos all throughout – guides the reader to the different posts, with a legend which helps one understand the *raison d'être* of this part of the citadel. In the meantime, this is illustrated with a large photo of old gunpowder barrels and some original cannon-balls which are among the exhibits in the magazine.

Another site controlled by *Wirt Ghawdex* within the walls of the ‘small city’, is that with the enormous grain silos erected on the site of the late medieval Hebrew Ghetto next to St John’s Cavalier. Together they could hold about 100 cubic meters of grain, from which bread, the staple diet of the inhabitants, could be made. In this chapter Vella gives details about the silos and their importance in the daily life of the Gozitans. Until very recently, before being handed down to *Wirt Ghawdex*, the silos were managed by the Water Services Corporation and used as water reservoirs.

The last attractions about which Vella writes and are also being managed by *Wirt Ghawdex*, are the World War II shelter and the Battery, in The Citadel, too.

A wintry panoramic photograph of the northern part of Gozo, together with a legend of the hills, valleys, and inhabited places, is spread on pages 28 and 29; this is a scene which may be enjoyed from up the northern bastions.

Vella concludes his researched study with a short overview of Rabat’s historic core and beyond.

The publication – which was sponsored by two members of the NGO, who chose to remain unanimous – has an introduction penned by *Wirt Ghawdex* president, Mr Franco Masini.

This book, profusely illustrated with excellent colour photos by professional photographer Daniel Cilia, is offered for sale for Euro 5.00 and, together with the other *Wirt Ghawdex* publications - *The Gozo Boat* (€ 5.00); *Mgarr ix-Xini Tower* (€ 5.00); *The Gran Castello at Rabat, Gozo* (€ 10.00); and *The Church of St Cecilia on the Island of Gozo* (€ 10.00) – will be on sale at the Book Distributors Ltd stand, at the Malta Book Fair, held at the Mediterranean Conference Centre, between coming Wednesday 7 and Sunday 11 November 2012.

The book may be obtained also, against a donation of Euro 5.00, sent to Mr Giovanni Zammit (Executive Secretary, *Wirt Ghawdex*, Tel: 2156 1947), ‘Wirt Ghawdex’, Il -Wied tal-Lunzjata, (Limits of Ta’ Karem), Ghawdex. Cheques should be addressed to *Wirt Ghawdex*. The book will be sent by post within a week.

JOE ZAMMIT CIANTAR
PRO *Wirt Ghawdex*

A BRIEF GUIDE TO THE
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